Resettlement of Tribals of Jaduguda

*642. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Jharkhandis have approached him for resettlement of tribals of Jaduguda, away from the Uranium mining affected area in Jharkhand;

(b) if so, what are their apprehensions in respect of radio-active material exposure in that area; and

(c) the action proposed to rehabilitate them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) An organisation titled the "Jharkhandis Organisation Against Radiation" (JOAR) has recently submitted a representation to Prime Minister making a number of demands in the context of (alleged) adverse impact of the operations of the Uranium Corporation of India Ltd. (UCIL), a Central public sector undertaking of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), at Jaduguda in the East Singhbhum District of Bihar. Apart from alleging about the impact of the uranium mining operations (low-level radiation) on the environment, health, safety and socio-economy of Jaduguda area, demands have also been made on issues like constitution of a multi-disciplinary team from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi to study the above mentioned (alleged) impact, evacuation of villages around the existing tailing ponds/dams of UCIL to safer places and their resettlement, establishment of a medical centre in or around Jaduguda to treat low-level radiation related diseases, stoppage of (alleged) "import" of radio-active waste and radio-medical waste into Jaduguda for (alleged) dumping storage and autonomy of the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB)

UCIL operates three uranium mines at Jaduguda, Bhatin and Narwapahar respectively and a uranium-processing mill at Jaduguda. Since UCIL's inception, the radiation levels in and around its mines and plants have been continuously monitored by the Health Physics Unit of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), a constituent unit of the DAE. The Health Physics Unit stationed at Jaduguda consists of qualified specialists in the relevant field.

The radiation levels in and around Jaduguda on account of releases from the mines/plants of UCIL are well within the limits prescribed in this behalf by the AERB which are, in turn, based on the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

Surveys conducted in the recent past by teams of medical doctors and other specialists, including doctors from the Tata Main Hospital, Jamshedpur and Health Department of the Government of Bihar and health physicists and medical officers from BARC, have also established that the specific cases of diseases examined by the teams have no relation to radiation. Recent radiation survey of the area around Jaduguda has also reconfirmed that the operations of UCIL have not resulted in any increase in the background radiation levels beyond those prescribed by the AERB.

About 51 acres of private land were acquired by UCIL in the recent past, through the local District administration, for construction of its third stage tailing pond. Full compensation for the land so acquired has been paid by UCIL. Alternate land has also been provided by the District administration for housing of the families whose lands/houses were acquired. This land has been levelled by UCIL which has also provided drinking water tube wells there. Additional financial assistance (over and above due compensation for acquisition) has also been committed by UCIL to each affected family for construction of dwelling houses. Finally, 51 persons from 46 families whose land and houses were acquired and 10 persons from 10 families from which only lands were acquired have been provided employment in UCIL. Thus, all necessary steps have been taken by UCIL, in consultation with the local District administration, for resettlement of the families whose lands/houses were acquired for construction of the third stage tailing pond.

In view of the fact that the operations of the UCIL have not led to any radiation related diseases in the area around Jaduguda, the question of setting up a medical centre in or around Jaduguda for treatment of such (alleged) diseases does not arise.

Magnesium-di-uranate (MDU) produced by UCIL is sent in safe containers to the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC), Hyderabad for fabrication of fuel for the nuclear power reactors. The raffinate generated after extraction of uranium at the NFC is brought back to UCIL for further reprocessing in the uranium mill at Jaduguda and recovery of the residual uranium value therefrom. No radioactive or radiochemical waste is being dumped by UCIL, as alleged by JOAR. The effuent from the tailing ponds is treated to the prescribed standards at the effluent treatment plant of UCIL and the treated water is mostly reused in the uranium mill. Only a small quantity of the treated water, meeting the prescribed norms, is discharged in a stream.

The AERB has been established under the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and has the necessary functional autonomy to discharge the duties and responsibilities entrusted to it, including those in the area of radiological safety.

Supply of Desulphurised Petrol

*643. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have plan to ensure supply of unadulterated petrol and diesel at retail outlets;

(b) whether Government plan to supply ultra low sulphur diesel with sulphur content of 0.05% (maximum) all over the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The oil marketing companies supply petrol and diesel as per specifications laid down by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) all over the country. In order to ensure that the quality of petrol and diesel is maintained as per BIS specifications, oil marketing companies carry out regular/surprise checks of retail outlets, to control various malpractices including adulteration. In addition, special drives are launched by the oil companies both on their own and also under direction of Government from time to time to check malpractices.

Further to check adulteration Government have decided to promulgate Solvent, Slop, Raffinate (Acquisition, Sale, Storage and Prevention of Use in Automobile) Order, and Naphtha (Acquisition, Sale, Storage and Prevention of Use in Automobile) Order.

(b) and (c) Oil marketing companies have already introduced ultra low sulphur petrol for all categories of vehicles in the National Capital Region since 1.4.2000.

Oil Industry has also introduced ultra low sulpur diesel with 0.05% maximum sulphur content for new non-commercial vehicles through select outlets in the National Capital Region since 1.4.2000.

In order to supply 0.05% maximum sulphur content diesel all over the country, modifications in the existing refineries need to be carried out. An